

THE GREEKS AS INTERPRETERS.—When we speak of the Greeks we unwittingly speak of to-day and yesterday; their universally known history is a blank mirror, always reflecting something that is not in the mirror itself. We enjoy the freedom of speaking about them in order to have the right of being silent about others—so that these Greeks themselves may whisper something in the ear of the reflective reader. Thus the Greeks facilitate to modern men the communication of much that is debatable and hard to communicate.

OF THE ACQUIRED CHARACTER OF THE GREEKS. —We are easily led astray by the renowned Greek clearness, transparency, simplicity, and order, by their crystal-like naturalness and crystal-like art, into believing that all these gifts were bestowed on the Greeks—for instance, that they could not but write well, as Lichtenberg expressed it on one occasion. Yet no statement could be more hasty and more untenable. The history of prose from Gorgias to Demosthenes shows a course of toiling and wrestling towards light from the obscure, overloaded, and tasteless, reminding one of the labour of heroes who had to construct the first roads through forest and bog. The dialogue of tragedy was the real achievement of the dramatist, owing to its uncommon clearness and precision, whereas the national tendency was to riot in symbolism and innuendo, a tendency expressly fostered by the great choral